



# AUSTRALIAN SAHAJA YOGA COUNCIL AND LIFE ETERNAL TRUST AUSTRALIA

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR,  
NATIONAL COUNCILLORS AND LETA TRUSTEE-DIRECTORS

OCTOBER 2020

Dear Sahaja Yoga Family,

As the newly appointed Sahaja Yoga Australia National Coordinator and in conjunction with the National Councillors and the Life Eternal Trust Australia Trustee-Directors (the LETA Trustees) we are writing to you to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Australian Council and the LETA Trustees and to also provide the history of how the various administrative bodies were created by Her Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi to support Her spiritual work and the Collective needs.

It is hoped this document will assist everyone in gaining a better understanding of the structure of our administration as provided by Her Holiness, and that anyone with concerns can surrender everything to Shri Mataji as She wants us all to be as one in the joy of Her love and endless blessings.

## AUSTRALIAN SAHAJA YOGA COUNCIL

The Australian Council was created as one of Shri Mataji's instruments to aid in the fulfilment of Her Vision to build a new society of love and compassion, and to assist with arrangements for the spiritual nourishment and enjoyment of Her Sahaja Yoga family.

The Australian Council is responsible for:

- Promoting Sahaja Yoga to the wider community;
- Assisting new Yogis to get established and to become part of the larger Collective;
- Setting-up and advertising public programs;
- Provide and develop resources for spreading Sahaja Yoga;
- Proposing, Developing and Implementing projects for developing Sahaja Yoga culture;
- Communicating with the Collective;
- Generally supporting harmony, joy and unity amongst the Collective;
- Coordinating collective programs, pujas and other Collective events;
- Managing international matters by communicating and coordinating with National Councils and Coordinators in other countries. Including Sahaja Yoga marriages, international pujas, international projects for spreading Sahaja Yoga and the like;

- Ensuring Collective activities are undertaken in a responsible manner and in accordance with legal requirements and societal expectations. For example, supporting Working With Children Checks, managing Covid-19 plans and the like;
- Working to promote and protect the good name of Sahaja Yoga and Shri Mataji in the community, including online;
- Working with guidance from the LETA Trustees to preserve and manage our auspicious Collective properties provided to us by Shri Mataji's grace;
- Working with guidance from the LETA Trustees and the Finance Team to ensure Collective funds are managed responsibly and are always used for a proper purpose;

*And more recently,*

- Moving our Collective spiritual life online to ensure we continue to experience it when we cannot meet in person.

The Australian Council is made up of the National Coordinator, National Councillors and State Councillors. Each role carries a different kind of responsibility but in general the councillors always seek to work together in a collaborative and unified manner.

The National Coordinator and the LETA Trustees consult and communicate with each other on a regular basis to ensure they are working together in a harmonious and unified manner that serves the advancement of Sahaja Yoga and most importantly in a way that pleases our Holy Mother.

The Australian Sahaja Yoga Council is, however, not a legal entity for the purposes of government and financial compliances. HH Shri Mataji created the Life Eternal Trust Australia ('LETA') to fulfil that role.

## **LIFE ETERNAL TRUST AUSTRALIA**

LETA was established in 1986 as the peak administrative body to administer and promote Sahaja Yoga and its meditation, which has been delivered as a community service throughout Australia since 1981.

LETA has been set up as a legal entity for the purpose of operating as an administrative organisation to manage the secular, legal, and financial affairs of Sahaja Yoga Meditation on a national basis.

This administrative framework supports the Australian Council to undertake their roles whilst keeping the councillors free of the associated administrative burdens and personal legal responsibilities the LETA Trustees must carry.

It also means the LETA Trustees can advise the councillors on how to carry out their roles in accordance with the legal, financial and other requirements that the LETA Trustees are responsible for and how they can promote those requirements to the Collective.

To ensure transparency and accountability in all financial matters, an independent Finance Team manages, and records all transactions which are then provided to, and checked by, an independent Auditor whose report is then submitted to the Australian Tax Office and other government departments to comply with our Registered Charity with ACNC status.

The LETA Trustees are duty bound to exercise their responsibilities and duties in good faith and to ensure compliance with general and specific laws overseen by:

- Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC)
- Office of State Revenue (OSR)
- Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)
- Australian Taxation Office (ATO)

## TENURE FOR COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES

In 2005 Shri Mataji issued a letter announcing a movement away from individual National Leaders to an arrangement of National Councils with a period of service of 3-5 years for Sahaja Councils and Committees.

Shri Mataji personally created Life Eternal Trust for Australia and in the drafting of the LETA Trust Deed, She did not create tenure (a fixed period of service) for Trustees. This has the benefit of creating continuity with governance and sound administration of the Trust's legal responsibilities, the prudent and professional management of Sahaja funds, and the maintenance and professional management of Sahaja properties, and other assets.

## COOPERATIVE SAHAJA ADMINISTRATION

The roles and responsibilities of the LETA Trustees are outlined in the legally registered artefacts of the LETA Trust Deed and the Life Eternal Properties Australia Pty Ltd (LEPA) Company Constitution.

The roles of the Australian Council have historically been carried out in a cooperative arrangement with the LETA Trustees, various committees and working groups, the Communication Team, Puja groups, and the wider Collective.

As we committed before Shri Mataji, the LETA Trustees and the Coordinators of the day will continue to collaborate and work together with shared goals for the advancement of Sahaja Yoga. The LETA Trustees and Australian Councillors have worked together since the National Councils arrangements started in 2005 and commit to continuing to do so.

## ADDING NEW TRUSTEE-DIRECTORS TO LIFE ETERNAL TRUST AUSTRALIA

The technical title of the LETA Trustees is that of "Trustee-Director" which refers to the Sahaja Yogis who are formally appointed as Directors to the Trustee Company (LEPA) being the sole Corporate Trustee of Life Eternal Trust Australia.

To safeguard the future of LETA, a process will be initiated to appoint additional Trustee-Directors to join the Trust and assist with the growing workload involved. This process is very different to appointing Sahaja Councillors. There are certain legal pre-conditions associated with becoming a Trustee-Director which will be explained to any Sahaja Yogis who become candidates to fulfil this important role in the Collective.

Due to increasing new organisational compliance requirements coming from various government departments any candidates must understand and accept their legal obligations as a Trustee-Director, and the potential to be exposed to serious financial and legal liabilities. Like all company directors in Australia, any Sahaja Yogis appointed as Trustee-Directors must personally comply with the relevant legal obligations as a Director under the *Corporations Act 2001*.

There are penalties and consequences including civil penalties, compensation proceedings and criminal charges for Directors who fail to comply with their obligations under Australian law. This will be covered when the process for candidates for Trustee- Directors is launched.

Shri Mataji has provided advice about the Trust and the process for the appointment of a new Trustee-Director which will inform the arrangements and process as we expand the Trust.

Upon taking up a position as a new Trustee-Director, a period of training and mentoring will be provided by the present Trustee-Directors, assisting any new Trustee-Directors to become fully competent in the position.

## MOVING FORWARD

Moving forward, the LETA Trustees will continue to develop the process to seek new candidates to serve as additional Trustee-Directors and will keep the National Coordinator and the Collective updated with their progress.

We are all Yogis in Mother's love and in our spiritual journey, every one of us has the blessing and opportunity to serve Shri Mataji and the Collective in various roles and responsibilities. As Coordinator, Councillors and Trustees, we are honoured to have this opportunity and are committed to work together to maintain the dharma and maryadas given to us by our Holy Mother.

We are all one family, and occasionally we will face various tests and challenges, and it is important that they are acknowledged and managed with full respect and love for all parties, and based on the premise that we are all Shri Mataji's children living together in Her Heart, with the understanding that it is She who does everything. We should therefore offer everything at Her Lotus Feet.

We hope everyone is coping with any Covid19 restrictions and we very much look forward to us all being able to be together in person again.

Jai Shri Mataji!

Thank you for your kind attention to these matters.

### Australian Coordinator

Brett Johnson



### National Councillors

Colin Berry



Andrii Grybovskyi



### Life Eternal Trust Australia Trustee-Directors

Craig Armstrong



Hari Gaikwad



Chris Kyriacou

